

MINUTES OF MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D. C., OCTOBER 23, 1936

The third meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts during the fiscal year 1937 was held in its office in the Navy Department Building on Friday, October 23, and Saturday, October 24, 1936. The following members were present:

Mr. Moore, Chairman,
Mr. Howells,
Mr. Savage,
Mr. Borie,
Mr. Shepley,
also H. P. Caemmerer,

Executive Secretary and Administrative Officer. The meeting was called to order at 9:30 a. m.

1. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF PRECEDING MEETING: The Minutes of the meeting held September 16, 1936, were approved.

2. RESOLUTION: Mr. Moore offered for adoption the following resolution: "Alice B. Caemmerer is hereby promoted as assistant to the secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts from \$1620 to \$2000 per annum, effective October 23, 1936." Mr. Moore commented on the increase in the work of the Commission in recent years and stated that the promotion provided by the resolution is deserved and justified. The Commission adopted the resolution.

3. TEXAS CENTENNIAL STATUE: Under date of October 8, 1936, the following letter was received from Mr. Walter C. Sharp, representing the Texas Centennial Architects, requesting the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts as to a wooden statue of a cowboy.

October 8, 1936.

The Commission of Fine Arts,
Navy Department Building,
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

I have been referred to you by Mr. Lee Lawrie. A statue carved in wood, has been submitted for placement in the Hall

of State, a monumental building being erected by the State of Texas to commemorate its Centennial.

The figure is not satisfactory to the State Board of Control, under whose supervision expenditures are being made. They are desirous, however, of committing no injustices and they realize that they are laymen in art. Will you give them your opinion of the sculptural merit of this figure from photographs that we have had made, if they are sent to you? The figure in question was done by Miss Dorothy Austin of Dallas.

The State Board of Control is composed of men who are desirous of serving the State efficiently, and an opinion from you on this figure will accord with precedent, where the Board has had to pass on matters in which the members themselves are not expert.

Will you please let me know whether you will render this assistance to us and, if so, outline any conditions you will wish made in connection therewith.

An immediate reply will be appreciated.

Yours very truly,
TEXAS CENTENNIAL ARCHITECTS
By Walter C. Sharp.

Mr. Savage said he had seen the statue before it was completed and felt it was unfortunate it should be placed directly in front of the finest painting of a cowboy he had ever seen. Further he did not think the statue was of such importance that it should stand on the main axis of the main hall, but suggested that it might be placed somewhere else in the building. The Commission concurred in this and Mr. Sharp was informed accordingly. (Exhibit A) (See also A-1)

4. SAN ANTONIO MEMORIALS: CENOTAPH TO COMMEMORATE THE ALAMO: The secretary presented a letter and photographs from Mrs. Sophie J. Austin of a cenotaph to commemorate the Alamo. It was indicated in the description that this memorial would cost \$450,000, whereas only \$100,000 has been allotted by the Texas Centennial Commission.

The Commission inspected the photographs. These showed that the model is covered with numerous figures and is so designed as to provide for a room

under the cenotaph. The comment was made that the model looked like a piece of pastry-maker's art. The Commission considered the design totally inappropriate for this memorial.

The Commission took note of the fact that this was an informal submission. The design was unanimously disapproved and Mrs. Austin was advised that the Commission of Fine Arts had recommended to the Texas Centennial Commission the appointment of an architectural adviser to arrange for a competition to be conducted in accordance with the rules of the American Institute of Architects, this being considered an architectural project. The architect should associate himself with a sculptor, who should also take into consideration the two additional statues (\$14,000 each) which the Texas Centennial Commission proposes for San Antonio. (Exhibit B)

5. NEW ROCHELLE MEMORIAL COIN: The secretary brought to the attention of the Commission Mr. Wise's revised design sent to the Commission by Mr. Pitt M. Skipton, Chairman of the New Rochelle Memorial Coin Committee, with letter as follows:

October 13, 1936.

Mr. H. P. Caemmerer,
Secretary, the Commission of Fine Arts,
Navy Department Building, Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

Referring to the letter of your Chairman Mr. Charles Moore dated September 29th last to Miss M. M. O'Reilly, Acting Director of the Mint, I enclose herewith as recommended a pencil sketch of a new design of obverse of the proposed New Rochelle half dollar.

This sketch is a representation of a photograph taken many years ago showing Bonnefoi Point in Echo Bay where, as history records, Huguenot refugees from La Rochelle, France, landed seeking in 1688 a haven in the new land of freedom and opportunity.

It accurately represents the shore line of this city on Long Island Sound as it was before seawalls, etc. marred its natural beauty.

I trust that this design of Lorillard Wise may meet with the approval of your Commission so that the Treasury Department may soon proceed with the minting of this coin. No copy of the reverse is inclosed as it is understood that the design for the reverse as previously submitted is approved by the placing of the date 1938 on a line with 1688.

Would you kindly advise me when your Commission will meet again? Thanking you in advance for your consideration I am

Very truly yours,
(Signed) Pitt M. Skipton, Chairman,
New Rochelle Commemorative Coin Committee.

The design had been sent to Mr. Lawrie who advised that he did not think the landscape would turn out well. Upon Mr. Lawrie's suggestion the design had been sent to Mr. Clarke, who wrote as follows:

October 20, 1936.

Dear Mr. Caemmerer:

I have just received your memorandum, enclosing photostats concerning the coin commemorating the founding of the City of New Rochelle. Personally, I don't care particularly about the design because it is an attempt to copy a photograph, and results in producing a ship which seems to be too small in scale for the coin. I should think that the medalist could take a little more liberty with the scene he is trying to depict, making the boat larger and treating the landscape in a decorative fashion rather than trying to attempt to make it naturalistic. I agree entirely with Mr. Lawrie that sculptured landscapes, unless portrayed decoratively, are hardly ever successful.

Of course we are dealing with someone who is not a medalist and who is trying to do something which is beyond his capacity to accomplish well. I feel timid about offering this criticism because I hardly qualify to pass expert judgment on matters of this sort and I am perfectly willing to let the matter rest with Mr. Lawrie's decision in the matter. He, however, left the door open for the adverse criticism that I have made and I advance it, hopeful that it may strengthen Mr. Lawrie's hand and in turn the hand of the Commission, so that we may insist upon getting something better than just "good enough" for our commemorative coins.

I would be pleased to have you send copies of this letter to Mr. Lawrie and Mr. Savage and to any others interested. But let

me emphasize again that this is a matter for the sculptor-member of the Commission rather than for one whose field is as far removed as landscape architecture.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Gilmore D. Clarke.

The Commission considered the revised design in detail and objected seriously to the landscape scene. Mr. Savage and Mr. Howells thought that inasmuch as so many localities are producing such poor coins and since this is still poorer the Commission should insist on the New Rochelle Committee getting an experienced medalist for this work.

The Commission disapproved the design and a report was sent to Mr. Skipton accordingly. (Exhibit C)

6. WATER TOWER, ANACOSTIA: The secretary presented a series of revised designs submitted by Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth, Municipal Architect, for a new water tower to be erected in Anacostia in the vicinity of Fort Stanton. The tower is to have a height of 100 feet and a diameter of 50 feet. It will hold 500,000 gallons of water. Congress has made an appropriation of \$35,000 available for it. The tower will be of steel.

Mr. Howells and Mr. Shepley changed the preferred design, marked A, omitting the panel and buttresses. Upon their recommendation the Commission approved it as changed and a report was sent to Mr. Wyeth accordingly. (Exhibit D)

7. STANDARD OIL COMPANY SIGN: Mr. F. R. Washington, Manager of the Standard Oil Company Building at Second and Constitution Avenue, N. W., submitted a design for a sign on their building. He said they have a competitor who has a small very attractive station next door. Tourists think the Standard Oil Co. building is a Government building and go to the competitor.

Hence Mr. Washington wondered if he could have a red neon sign. Mr. Borie suggested white light but Mr. Washington said this would not give enough contrast. Mr. Shepley thought the little losenge shaped Esso sign very ugly and suggested a panel of thin metal letters such as are used at the Radio City in New York, these letters being effective due to reflected light. Such a sign would be a little stylish and a little in advance but better looking than the losenge shaped sign. Mr. Washington said that "Standard Esso Station" would go on the sign. For this wording Mr. Savage drew a sketch outline, which was given to Mr. Washington.

The Commission suggested that the Standard Oil Company get Mr. Friz (architect of the building) in Baltimore to make a scale drawing. It was pointed out that the sign would be restricted to 25 square feet in area.

Mr. Washington asked about flood lighting the building, the upper part being illuminated and the lower part dark. Mr. Borie advised that flood lighting should be from the pavement and should not be too bright.

8. PAINTINGS OF FORMER SECRETARIES OF THE INTERIOR: Mr. Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent of the Section of Painting and Sculpture, Treasury Department, submitted photographs of paintings by Mr. Henry S. Hubbell, with the following letter:

October 16, 1936.

Dear Mr. Moore:

Attached are photographs of eleven portraits painted by Mr. Henry Salem Hubbell for the Department of the Interior Building. These are submitted for the comment and advice of the Commission.

The originals of these portraits are in the Interior Department Building and will be available for inspection by the painter member of the Commission in case Mr. Savage wishes to inspect them.

They represent past Secretaries of the Department of the Interior.

Thanking you, I am

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent,
Section of Painting and Sculpture.

Mr. Savage inspected the photographs and said Mr. Hubbell is a good portrait painter, but since he has done all the paintings from photographs they are "post mortems"; further they are all just alike in technique. Mr. Borie regretted that the work had not been distributed among other painters for the sake of variation in style. Mr. Howells called attention to the 150 paintings of Doges in the Ducal Palace in Venice, the portraits all being the same size, though they were painted by different artists.

Upon the recommendation of Mr. Savage the Commission approved the portraits and Mr. Rowan was informed accordingly. (Exhibit E)

9. INTERIOR DEPARTMENT BUILDING DECORATION: Under date of October 19, 1936, a letter was received from Mr. Edward B. Rowan (Exhibit F) requesting a recommendation from the Commission of Fine Arts as to a number of painters and sculptors who could be asked to take part in a plan to decorate the new Interior Department Building.

The Commission decided that Mr. Savage should submit a list of painters and Mr. Lawrie a list of sculptors for this project. This they did and a report was sent to Mr. Rowan accordingly, (Exhibits G and H)

10. PROTEST AGAINST ABATTOIR: ^{Available} The Secretary reported an attempt was being made on the part of a local concern in east Washington to secure a

permit to enlarge their slaughterhouse, which, however, has existed there for many years, before the Zoning Commission was established.

The Commission protested against industrial establishments of this character in the greater Washington area. Attention was called to the fact that several years ago a company wanted to construct an abattoir near the Arlington Cemetery but members of Congress threatened to stop appropriations for the Arlington Memorial Bridge.

11. CONNECTICUT AVENUE APARTMENT HOUSE: Messrs. Able and Dillon, architects, submitted a sample of light red brick for their apartment house on Connecticut Avenue near the Zoological Park. Mr. Borie and Mr. Howells inspected the sample and considered it acceptable. They suggested, however, that the joints be made "whiter and yellower" so that one can feel the bricks, the joints in the sample being too blue. (Exhibit H)

12. NEW CHAIN BRIDGE: The Commission inspected the design made in the office of the Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia of the proposed rebuilding of Chain Bridge and were keenly disappointed in it. The design showed steel trusses over the bridge (which is to be 1,550 feet long and 29 feet wide). Congress has authorized an appropriation of \$350,000 for the work. Mr. Shepley said the scheme is absolutely obsolete as trusses are now put underneath. Mr. Moore pointed out that the Commission had expressed the opinion that a high level bridge is better for the locality since it would connect parkways on both sides of the river. The bridge to replace Chain Bridge at its present site should be a park bridge and not simply a patched up old bridge.

The design was given further consideration at the joint meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission when the above criticism was brought to the attention of Col. Sultan, the

Engineer Commissioner. Col. Sultan said Chain Bridge is in a very dangerous condition and it would delay the project more than a year to get the amount of \$1,000,000, which would be needed to build the type of bridge desired by the Commission.

Both Commissions hearing of the dangerous state of the bridge felt the work of rebuilding should not be delayed a great length of time and Colonel Sultan was authorized to proceed with it. Col. Sultan said this repair work is temporary and, therefore, they do not want to put too much money into it.

13. "DON'T GIVE UP THE SHIP" FLAG: Admiral T. C. Hart conferred with the Commission and explained the situation in regard to this flag which was on Commodore Oliver H. Perry's ship at the Battle of Lake Erie, on September 10, 1813. He said that he wanted to get in touch with some firm which would make a case for this flag in Memorial Hall at Annapolis. His class wants to make a memorial gift to its Alma Mater and this offers an excellent opportunity. The present case is rectangular and is set up in a lunette and, of course, the lines do not harmonize. The flag has been there for 25 years and all under-midshipmen take their entering oath underneath it and the thought of moving it is out of the question.

The Commission felt in the first place that this is an architectural problem. Williams and Company was mentioned as being good but they are now out of business. It was explained that if the Gorham people did the work they would not design the case.

As to the conditions of display of the flag, Admiral Hart said it also must be seen from the rotunda, whereas now it cannot be seen unless you come

quite close. They think even of having the flag put in a vacuum. The problem is to get a design of a container and an estimate, which will meet the approval of the Superintendent of Annapolis. Admiral Hart made a sketch to show the surroundings of the flag. He said that if it is to be a metal container it could not be too heavy as the structure is not too strong.

Mr. Howells suggested that the line of the lunette could be followed by a little Renaissance pediment. The Commission suggested that Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth, Municipal Architect, be selected to design the cabinet and that the Gorham Company do the casting. Mr. Howells also mentioned the Roman Bronze Works and the National Bronze Co. of New York. *Nyeth suggested a design*

14. RESTAURANT, MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE AND NORTH CAPITOL STREET: Mr. E. Burton Corning, architect, and Mr. Morris Simon, attorney, presented designs for a restaurant to be located at Massachusetts Avenue and North Capitol Street. The design for this building, which is across from the Post Office and adjacent to Union Station Plaza, was submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Shipstead-Luce Act. Mr. Corning said the property cannot be bought but the clients are renting it on a ten-year lease and as the building is going to be temporary they do not want to make it any finer than necessary. The place will have curb service as well as inside service. He pointed out that they did not design the restaurant in classical style as it would look more like a bank or library, so it was designed to look like a restaurant--light and cheerful. However, they did not wish to make it ultra modern. In any event it is a great improvement over what is there now, an ordinary parking lot.

The structure will be circular in shape and of enameled metal somewhat like limestone in color only a little warmer. Mr. Borie suggested that he

not try to imitate stone in some other material; this is not going to be done. Mr. Borie felt that metal will be satisfactory and that stone would be entirely too heavy. It was pointed out that the building could be in stucco but this material does not last in Washington. There will be landscape development in connection with the building, the acute corner of the lot being used entirely for planting.

In general the scheme presented was considered to be satisfactory and the Commission approved it.

15. COAST GUARD BUILDING: Commander F. A. Hunnewell of the Coast Guard Service, came to ask the Commission about the proposed location of the Coast Guard Service headquarters. He said he came to the Commission to get a general idea as to the appropriateness of a Government building for the Coast Guard above H Street. If there is no objection it may be their purpose to acquire the University Club at 15th and I Streets, N. W., now for sale, and some property on I Street. The University Club and Raquet Club have merged and will locate in the Raquet Club. He said it was formerly agreed that they would have the Treasury Annex if they gave up the Apex Building quarters assigned to them, but they were moved out of the Treasury Annex and they went into the Wilkins Building. It is their intention now to buy the University Club and enlarge it, i. e., they would have to build back along I Street where now are some very old unsightly houses. As far as the citizens' point of view is concerned, it may not be so good for Government offices to creep into that area.

Mr. Moore told Commander Hunnewell he thought he was making a good move to buy the University Club; this would keep alive the idea of making this a

Government center and the Commission concurred in this point. The proposal of the Coast Guard Service to locate in the University Club was therefore approved.

16. LIGHTING OF THE MALL: Mr. Moore read the following letters to and from Mr. Finnan regarding the lighting of the Arlington Memorial Bridge and the Memorial Avenue:

October 5, 1936.

Memorandum for Mr. H. P. Caemmerer.

It will be appreciated if the Commission of Fine Arts at its meeting in Washington on October 23 can give consideration to the matter of lighting the Arlington Memorial Bridge, Memorial Avenue, and the hemicycle.

It has been suggested that the Mall lights may possibly be adopted for this installation, however, before proceeding with further studies we would appreciate having a definite recommendation from your Commission.

(Signed) C. Marshall Finnan,
Superintendent.

October 11, 1936.

Dear Mr. Finnan:

Referring to your letter of October 5, to Mr. Caemmerer, will you be ready to give the Commission on October 23, the results of your experience with the Mall lights? Are they practical? Are they satisfactory in operation? Do people like them?

The Commission would like to use them on the Bridge and around the Lincoln Memorial if they meet requirements.

Yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore.

Mr. Finnan, who was present at the meeting, when asked about the operation of the Mall lights, replied that they are very satisfactory. The cost of the lights is negligible, and their power of illumination is very good. During the summer insects got into the globes and obscured the light but the General Electric Company has made an attachment which prevents this.

Mr. Moore said the Commission has always tried to get a distinctive light for the Lincoln Memorial and the Arlington Memorial Bridge. He cited the distinctive lights around the Pennsylvania Station in New York. Mr. Finnan said Mr. Clarke has ordered an adaptation of the Mall light for the various parks in New York. Mr. Moore said that Frank Millet made an adaptation of a light in the Ringstrasse in Vienna, which came to be known in Washington as the Millet lamp post and adaptations of it were used all over the country.

Mr. Finnan asked whether the height of the Mall lamps (22 feet) was suitable. Mr. Moore said he would write to Mr. Kendall as to whether he would desire this height for the bridge. Mr. Borie thought 18 feet would be high enough and Mr. Finnan agreed that the lower they are on the bridge, the better. Around the Lincoln Memorial Mr. Moore believed they should be 22 feet high.

Attention was called to the light standards at Belvoir (Fort Humphreys) which resemble the Mall lights..

Further consideration is to be given to the subject.

17. STATUARY FOR ARLINGTON MEMORIAL BRIDGE HEAD: The following telegram was received from Mr. Leo Friedlander in regard to Mt. Airy granite for the statues at the entrance to the Arlington Memorial Bridge near the Lincoln Memorial:

October 23, 1936.

I had hoped to be present at Friday meeting to lay before the Commission more fully the difficulties the sculptors are experiencing with Mt. Airy granite price but recent illness prevents. From my own experience and from what Mr. Fraser recently wrote me is convincing that the recent appropriations for the stone in both instances is far from adequate to meet

present day Mt. Airy granite prices. May I ask that you be so kind and arrange to call a special meeting of the Commission and the sculptors at the office of McKim, Mead and White at the earliest possible date so that we may be able to fully discuss this matter.

Leo Friedlander.

The Commission considered this matter with Mr. Finnan, who said that the question of substituting some other granite for the Mt. Airy is one in which the National Park Service would concur with the understanding that such stone, either granite or marble, would be as good as the Mt. Airy. It was not thought necessary to have a special meeting of the Commission of Fine Arts concerning the matter, at least not right away. The Commission asked Mr. Moore to take up the question with Mr. Kendall, Mr. Fraser and Mr. Friedlander. Accordingly a telegram was sent to each of them. Mr. Fraser sent the following reply, showing that the present price of Mt. Airy granite is four times as much as he had originally estimated:

October 26, 1936.

My dear Mr. Moore:

Friedlander and I are in a difficult position, owing to the fact that a certain granite is specified; for instance, eight pieces of granite compose my two groups, and for each piece in the rough, the Mount Airy Company has asked nearly \$5000, the total being \$39,000.

My contract with the Government was signed with the understanding from the Mount Airy Company that the amount would be \$10,000, and this amount is verified in my government contract for the work, which allows me \$12,000 when the granite is to be purchased.

Under the circumstances I believe the architects should allow us to get estimates from other granite companies to be used as bidding points against the Mount Airy Company. I think, however, there is no granite cheaper than Mount Airy, they have quoted \$1.50 to \$2.00 a cubic foot for large pieces only recently, except on this particular work, where the pieces are very large.

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) James E. Fraser.

Mr. Borie made the point that sculptors should not obligate themselves in a contract for purchase of stone that will not be procured for several years because this does not take into consideration the change in market prices.

18. PAINTING FOR THE POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT BUILDING: Under date of October 21, 1936, the following letter was received from Mr. Rowan, with which he submitted a full sized cartoon for a mural painting in the lobby of the Benjamin Franklin Postal Station by Tom Lea of El Paso:

October 21, 1936.

Dear Mr. Moore:

I am submitting under separate cover a full-sized cartoon for a mural in the lobby of the Benjamin Franklin Postal Station, Post Office Department Building, Washington, D. C., for the comment and advice of the Commission of Fine Arts. This is the work of Mr. Tom Lea of El Paso, Texas.

Attached herewith for the information of the Commission are two photographs: (1) Showing the original design; (2) Showing the design under consideration which is the same as the full-sized cartoon; together with a blue print indicating the space.

Mr. Eugene Savage, the painter member of the Commission, is acquainted with other works by Mr. Lea and is in a position to speak authoritatively of his sense of color, not revealed in the material submitted.

Of his subject matter, Mr. Lea has written:

"I am deeply interested in my subject--the 'Nesters' who fenced their little acres and plowed under the old cattle trails. With a pathetic kind of dogged strength and optimism they tried to grow crops on dry grass lands. If Nature didn't beat that courage and optimism out of them in those early days when the new barb wire and mail-order windmills made their homesteading possible--then She has seemingly at last defeated their children, whose legacy is a 'dust bowl'. It seems to me the Nesters are the Orphans of Senator Benton's 'Manifest Destiny'. But they remain symbols--and to my mind grand symbols for Americans to consider, and for a mural painter to paint. The tie-up of the subject to the

Post Office Department seems to me a very poignant one-- the mail box by the miserable wire gate is an embodiment of all thoughts beyond that hard horizon. The United States Mail reaches right out to the jumping--off--place".

Thanking you for a report on the reaction of the Commission on this work, I am

Very sincerely yours,
(Signed) Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent,
Section of Painting and Sculpture.

The Commission were informed by Mr. Savage that he had become familiar with Mr. Lea's work in Dallas and was highly pleased with it. Mr. Savage said further that in his opinion the cartoon submitted indicates that it is the work of an able painter and gives assurance of a good mural painting.

The Commission inspected the cartoon and photographs of the original design and also of the revised design together with the full sized cartoon. The painting represents an American citizen far out on the plains yet within reach of the U. S. mails. Upon the recommendation of Mr. Savage the Commission approved the design. A report was sent to Mr. Rowan accordingly. (Exhibit I)

19. PAINTING, DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE BUILDING: Under date of October 21, 1936, the following letter was received from Mr. Edward B. Rowan, submitting an original color sketch and a photograph of the revised sketch of John Ballator of Topeka, Kansas, for a mural painting in the Department of Justice Building:

October 21, 1936.

Dear Mr. Moore:

I am submitting herewith the original color sketch chosen from a national competition by an advisory committee of artists for one of the stairway panels in the Department of Justice Building, together with a photograph of a drawing showing the suggested changes which the artist contemplates in this design. These are the work of Mr. John Ballator of Topeka, Kansas.

In accordance with the wishes of the Commission, the accepted sketch of Mr. Emil Bisttram, one of the other artists doing work in the stairwell, is submitted for comparison, as well as the blue print showing the space to be decorated.

The subject matter of Mr. Ballator's panel is "Man Emancipated Through Justice".

Thanking you for the reaction of the Commission to this work,
I am

Very cordially yours,
(Signed) Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent,
Section of Painting and Sculpture.

This photograph was brought to the particular attention of Mr. Savage, who considered it in connection with the sketch by Mr. Emil Bisttram for one of the paintings in the series.

Mr. Savage inspected the sketch and made the criticism that the central figure at the bottom of the photograph with arm pointing upward is too stiff. He suggested that the artist re-study the figure. The Commission approved the sketch subject to this criticism. (Exhibit J)

20. INSPECTION OF MURAL PAINTINGS, NATIONAL ARCHIVES BUILDING: Under date of October 15, 1936, the Commission received the following letter from the office of John Russell Pope:

October 15, 1936.

The Commission of Fine Arts
Navy Department Building
Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen:

The murals for the Archives Building by Mr. Barry Faulkner have been completed and installed. It is expected that the scaffolds will be dissembled in a few days after which a clear view of the paintings can be had.

We understand that there is to be a meeting of the Commission a week from this Friday.

It is suggested that this would be a most convenient time for the members to view the murals and give their comment.

Very truly yours,
OFFICE OF JOHN RUSSELL POPE
(Signed) Daniel Paul Higgins.

The Commission inspected the paintings in the rotunda of the National Archives Building. They flank a shrine in which at some future time are to be placed the original copies of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States that are now in the Library of Congress. Each painting is 34 feet long by 14 feet high and the figures are about 8 feet high. There are from twenty-five to thirty statesmen in each painting who took an active part in the framing of each of these documents.

Mr. Barry Faulkner was present and stated that the statesmen represented in the Declaration of Independence painting and the Constitution of the United States painting, with few exceptions, were members of the most important committees in the Continental Congress and the Constitutional Convention. The other statesmen, although not members of the committees, were men whose influence in the two gatherings was of importance.

The Commission were highly pleased with the paintings and considered them a real contribution to the art of the National Capital. The Commission approved them and a report was sent to Mr. Pope and Mr. Louis Simon, Supervising Architect. (Exhibit F and K-1)

21. APEX BUILDING TERRACE: The Commission considered with members of the National Capital Park and Planning Commission a plan presented by Mr. Frost of Bennett, Parsons and Frost, architects, of Chicago, for the treatment of the terrace in front of the proposed Apex Building. Mr. W. E. Reynolds, Assistant Director of the Procurement Division of the Treasury Department, was present and stated that the sum of \$3,500,000 has been made available

for the building from P. W. A. funds and that the building when built will house the Federal Trade Commission. The plans for the Apex Building had been approved by the Commission of Fine Arts some months ago. The Secretary reported that it will provide 125,000 square feet of office space and will be large enough to house the 650 employees of the Federal Trade Commission. The Securities and Exchange Commission, which has charge of the inspection of bonds and securities, until recently a part of the Federal Trade Commission, is now independent and is housed in the old Interstate Commerce Commission Building at 18th and Pennsylvania Avenue, with 2,000 employees.

The members of both Commissions inspected the plan for the terrace and considered it satisfactory. It was approved subject to such minor changes as may be necessary due to relocation of curbs--a problem to be worked out with the Highway Department of the District of Columbia.

22. GREAT PLAZA OF THE TRIANGLE: Mr. W. E. Reynolds, Assistant Director of the Procurement Division, Treasury Department, reported that it is the desire of the Procurement Division to develop the Great Plaza east of the Department of Commerce Building. He said that the grounds (which are as large as Lafayette Square) are now being used for a parking lot accommodating 1,000 automobiles. The Treasury Department secures considerable revenue from the parking of these automobiles but officials of the Procurement Division, nevertheless, desire to see the plaza properly developed. Mr. Reynolds offered three schemes:

1. To continue to use the grounds for a parking lot but with a great deal of planting which would hide the automobiles.

2. An underground garage similar to that at the Capitol, which, however, would cost about \$800,000 and would be primarily for the convenience

of workers in the Labor, Post Office and Interstate Commerce Commission buildings. It would still be necessary to give the grounds a landscape treatment, which would cost about \$500,000, this making the total cost of the scheme \$1,300,000.

3. The landscape plan that had been approved by the Commission of Fine Arts which could be carried out for about a half million dollars. It would also provide a site for the \$250,000 Oscar Straus Memorial on the plaza adjacent to 14th Street.

The members of both Commissions considered the project very carefully--the scheme for use of the plaza for a parking lot was disapproved as also the scheme for an underground garage. A motion was adopted to recommend to the Procurement Division that they carry out the third scheme which provides for the landscape scheme for the Great Plaza in accordance with the approved plan.

The necessity for making provision for the housing of automobiles in municipal or privately owned garages in the down-town areas of Washington was emphasized, so that many of the automobiles that are parked in the streets would be removed.

23. LEVEE, POTOMAC PARK: A plan was presented at the joint meeting, suggesting several schemes for constructing levees in Potomac Park to protect the public buildings during high water. One of these plans suggested a high 19-foot embankment extending east and west along Independence Avenue from 14th Street westward to the river. This was disapproved because of its unsightliness--it would be comparable to the railroad embankment in the locality; further it would not meet the situation because it would have to be pierced by culverts to allow traffic through to the south.

Scheme 2 provided for a reasonably high embankment back of the Navy and Munitions Building from the Lincoln Memorial to the Washington Monument

grounds. Seventeenth Street would be protected by sand bags during periods of high water. This scheme was offered by the Office of National Capital Parks. This method was used during the period of high water in March 1936 and really met the situation.

A third scheme was to build a levee along Potomac Park. It was admitted that a levee along Potomac Park adjacent to the river would protect the park from high water but would be a very unsightly thing and probably would ruin the parkway drive. It was decided to refer this question to the Commission of Fine Arts for particular study.

The urgency of the situation, as explained by Colonel Sultan, Engineer Commissioner of the District of Columbia, is due to the fact that Congress has authorized an appropriation of several million dollars for building levees in many places threatened by flood water in different parts of the United States, out of which allotment \$573,000 has been made available to the District of Columbia. Therefore, the Engineer Commissioner is required under the act to make a special report to Congress at the next session.

24. BOUNDARY CHANNEL BRIDGE: Mr. McNary and Mr. Spellman of the Bureau of Public Roads were present to consider with both the Commission of Fine Arts and the National Capital Park and Planning Commission the question of building the Boundary Channel Bridge and the additional arch on the Virginia side of the Key Bridge to allow for the passage of the George Washington Memorial Parkway up the Potomac. It was stated that there is not money enough available to carry out both projects at the present time.

Both Commissions decided that the Boundary Channel Bridge, connecting the north end of Columbia Island with Virginia, should be built first and whatever

money is left now should be made available for the additional Key Bridge arch.

25. TRIP TO FREDERICKSBURG: INSPECTION OF CHANCELLORSVILLE AND WILDERNESS BATTLEFIELDS: At the request of the National Park Service the Commission made a trip of inspection to Fredericksburg and inspected the Chancellorsville and Wilderness Battlefields. The Director of the National Park Service, A. B. Cammerer, accompanied the Commission and stated it was the desire of the National Park Service to have the advice of the Commission of Fine Arts in matters of landscape development and the location of memorials for all the battlefield areas known as military parks under the jurisdiction of the National Park Service. At Fredericksburg the Commission stopped at the headquarters of the National Park Service and met Mr. Branch Spalding, Regional Superintendent, who is also in charge of the Yorktown, Appomattox and Petersburg Military Parks. The Commission also met Mr. William Howard, Superintendent of the Fredericksburg area and his assistant, Mr. Raleigh Taylor.

At Chancellorsville the Commission saw the monument, a plain granite obelisk, erected at the spot where Stonewall Jackson fell. This memorial needs landscape setting. Mr. Moore said that Mrs. Fraser recently won a competition for an equestrian monument of Lee and Jackson. This monument represents Lee and Jackson at their last conference in Chancellorsville. It is to be erected in Baltimore.

The Commission then visited the Wilderness Battlefield, which is 12 miles west of Fredericksburg. Several wooden tablets have been erected at various points; some of them should be redesigned. The relief maps were not considered satisfactory as they do not show the significant points of the campaign and battles.

The Commission saw the spot where a monument is being erected to General Wadsworth. This is on ground owned by the State of Virginia. A shaft of local stone has been erected on which is to be placed a memorial tablet. The Secretary showed Mr. Borie and Mr. Shepley a design of the memorial. They thought that the work done on the monument thus far was satisfactory.

The Commission noted numerous roads and trails laid out through these battlefields to points of interest.

The National Park Service officials expressed their appreciation of the interest of the Commission in this project and it was decided that problems pertaining to these military parks would be taken up by the Commission at subsequent meetings.

The Commission returned to Washington Saturday afternoon.

C O P Y

October 29, 1936.

Dear Sir:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on October 23, 1936, considered the photographs you submitted of a statue carved in wood, proposed for placement in the West Texas Room.

The Commission advise that by reason of qualities peculiar to the figure itself, as well as the severe functional demands made upon it by the axial position it was intended to occupy, it be placed in another location.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Walter C. Sharp,
Texas Centennial Architects, Associated, Inc.,
603 Construction Building,
Dallas, Texas.

EXHIBIT A

C O P Y

October 26, 1936.

Dear Mrs. Austin:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on October 23, 1936, considered the photographs, which you submitted with your letter of October 6th, of a cenotaph to be placed upon Alamo Plaza in San Antonio.

The Commission have recommended to the Texas Centennial Commission the appointment of an architectural adviser to supervise a competition to secure plans and models for the monuments proposed for San Antonio.

The photographs are herewith returned.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully, yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mrs. Sophie S. Austin,
905 Mason Street,
San Antonio, Texas.

EXHIBIT B

C O P Y

October 28, 1936.

Dear Mr. Skipton:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on October 23, 1936, considered the revised design, by Lorillard Wise, for the obverse of the New Rochelle half dollar.

Nothing in the composition indicates that the designer has given real thought to presenting a historical scene from the standpoint of a medallist.

The Commission feel that this work should be placed in the hands of an artist who has had experience in producing designs for medals and coins.

The Commission had hoped that on second trial a design not unworthy of a place in the coinage of the United States and significant of the event commemorated might be submitted. In this they were disappointed. The design, therefore, is disapproved.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very respectfully,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Mr. Pitt M. Skipton, Chairman,
New Rochelle Commemorative Coin Committee,
New Rochelle, New York.

EXHIBIT C

C O P Y

October 26, 1936.

Dear Mr. Wyeth:

The Commission of Fine Arts, at their meeting on October 23, 1936, considered the sketches which you submitted for the proposed water tower in Anacostia.

The Commission approve the design marked A, with the suggestion that panels and buttresses that were shown in the design be omitted.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Nathan C. Wyeth,
Municipal Architect,
District Building,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT D

C O P Y

October 26, 1936.

Dear Mr. Rowan:

The photographs of eleven portraits painted by Mr. Henry S. Hubbell of past Secretaries of the Department of the Interior, which you submitted with your letter of October 16th, were considered by the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on October 23, 1936. The Commission approve the portraits.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent,
Section of Painting and Sculpture,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT E

TREASURY DEPARTMENT

WASHINGTON



PROCUREMENT DIVISION
PUBLIC BUILDINGS BRANCH

IN REPLYING QUOTE THE ABOVE SUB-
JECT, BUILDING, AND THESE LETTERS PB- SA-P&S

OCT 19 1936

OCT 20 1936

Mr. Charles Moore, Chairman
The Commission of Fine Arts
New Navy Department Building
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Moore:

The Section of Painting and Sculpture, Procurement Division, Treasury Department, is in charge of the mural and sculpture decoration in the new Department of the Interior Building, Washington, D. C. Following the procedure which produced such excellent results in the mural decoration of the Post Office Department Building and Justice Department Building, the Section plans to invite a new advisory committee which will consist of some twenty members, geographically distributed over the entire United States, to be composed of artists, art museum directors, and persons of unquestioned knowledge of the arts. This committee will be asked to recommend to the Section the names of American painters and sculptors who, in the opinion of the members of the committee, are particularly qualified to carry out the art work in the Interior Building.

You are herewith respectfully invited to serve as a member of this committee.

It is the desire of the Section to procure for the decoration of the Interior Building the best contemporary art which this country can produce. A certain part of the work involved will be given out by direct appointment as the result of recommendations of artists' names by the advisory committee.

The list submitted by each member of the committee will be tabulated and used as a guide in selecting the artists to be commissioned. Attached hereto is a ballot with space provided for the names of twenty-five painters and ten sculptors. Kindly fill in the names and, if possible, the addresses of the artists you recommend for such consideration, sign the ballot, and return it to this office not later than November 15, 1936.

The ballot will be considered confidential by us, and we assure you that no public announcement will be made of the individual voting,

although an announcement may be made of the composite results at a later date. As a protection to the members of the committee from undue pressure, the names of the committee members will not be announced until awards are made. Your regarding this matter as confidential until you are advised of the awards will be appreciated.

It is further understood that your participation in this phase of the program will not create any obligation on your part to give further time to the matter if you find it inconvenient. A small group of committee members may, however, be asked later to serve on a special jury in connection with any competitions that may be inaugurated later to procure additional artists for the Interior Building other than those commissioned as a result of the original voting of the advisory committee.

In considering artists for your recommendation, it might be helpful if you knew that the major theme of mural decoration, covering some thirty panels in various parts of the building, will deal with Conservation as an interpretation of the activities of the various bureaus of the Department of the Interior. Many of the activities of the Department will factually be most completely expressed in landscape painting; for example, the General Land Office, the National Parks, the Bureaus of Reclamation, Mines, and of Indian Affairs all present material which could be interpreted in landscape treatment. There will also be a certain amount of historical material, such as the early explorations and the settling and the development of the various sections of the country and territories. Therefore, it seems that a preponderant number of landscape painters should be included on the list. The subject matter of two large sculpture reliefs will commemorate two historical explorations, that of Lewis and Clark in the Northwest and of Powell along the Colorado River.

We believe that this will be work of great importance and will appreciate your kind cooperation in serving on the advisory committee.

Very cordially yours,



Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent
Section of Painting & Sculpture

SECTION OF PAINTING AND SCULPTURE

I recommend the following painters and sculptors for work in the Interior Department Building in Washington, D. C.

<u>Painters</u>		<u>Sculptors</u>	
1	Earl H. Hays	1	Paul Hays
2	Henry Hays	2	Henry Hays
3	John Lee	3	John Lee
4	Samuel Adams	4	Charles Hays
5	Reginald Hays	5	Clara Hays
6	John Hays	6	Robert Hays
7	John Hays	7	Joseph Hays
8	John Hays	8	Edward Hays
9	John Hays	9	Edmund Hays
10	John Hays	10	Albert Hays
11	John Hays		
12	John Hays		
13	John Hays		
14	John Hays		
15	John Hays		
16	John Hays		
17	John Hays		
18	John Hays		
19	John Hays		
20	John Hays		
21	John Hays		
22	John Hays		
23	John Hays		
24	John Hays		
25	John Hays		

Date _____

Signature _____

Exhibit G

C O P Y

November 9, 1936.

Dear Mr. Rowan:

I received your letter of October 19, concerning plans for mural and sculptural decorations in the new Department of the Interior Building and brought it to the attention of the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on October 23, 1936.

In accordance with the suggestion of the Commission Mr. Savage has furnished the list of painters you desire and Mr. Lawrie the list of sculptors. The ballot sheet is attached hereto.

We trust that time will be allotted the artists to study their subjects. There is so much interesting historical material relating to the Department of the Interior, particularly in the work pertaining to the National Parks, Reclamation, Geological Survey, Indian Affairs, Bureau of Mines and the General Land Office in connection with the opening of the West. These ought to furnish remarkably fine paintings and works in sculpture as a result of this competition.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,
(Signed) Charles Moore,
Chairman.

Mr. Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent,
Section of Painting and Sculpture,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

DRAFT OF LETTER

EXHIBIT H

C O P Y

October 28, 1936.

Dear Mr. Rowan:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on October 23, 1936, considered the designs by Mr. Tom Lea of El Paso, Texas, for mural paintings in the lobby of the Benjamin Franklin Postal Station. The Commission inspected the full sized cartoon with much interest.

Mr. Savage is acquainted with the work of Mr. Lea and considers him a painter of ability who will produce an excellent mural painting. The Commission approved the drawing.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent,
Section of Painting and Sculpture,
Procurement Division,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT I

C O P Y

October 28, 1936.

Dear Mr. Rowan:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on October 23, 1936, considered the colored sketch which you submitted with your letter of October 21, by John Ballator of Topeka, Kansas, for a mural painting in the Department of Justice Building. The Commission considered the sketch in connection with Mr. Emil Bistram's sketch.

Mr. Savage in particular inspected the sketch and made the criticism that the central figure at the bottom of the picture with hand pointing upward is too stiff. It is suggested that the artist restudy the figure. Subject to this criticism, the Commission approved the sketch.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Very truly yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. Edward B. Rowan, Superintendent,
Section of Painting and Sculpture,
Procurement Division,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT J

C O P Y

October 24, 1936.

Dear Mr. Pope:

The Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting yesterday inspected the two mural paintings, "The Declaration of Independence" and "The Constitution of the United States" by Barry Faulkner in the Archives Building. The Commission approved the paintings.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Mr. John Russell Pope,
542 Fifth Avenue,
New York, N. Y.

EXHIBIT K

C O P Y

November 4, 1936.

My dear Mr. Simon:

The members of the Commission of Fine Arts at their meeting on October 23, visited the Archives Building and with Dr. Connor saw Barry Faulkner's murals, "The Declaration of Independence" and "The Constitution". The members of the Commission were unanimous in their approval of the murals. They saw them under varying conditions of lighting and had no suggestions of any changes to make.

For the Commission of Fine Arts:

Sincerely yours,

(Signed) Charles Moore,

Chairman.

Hon. Louis A. Simon,
Supervising Architect,
Treasury Department,
Washington, D. C.

EXHIBIT K-1

